

Christianity and Crisis

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DETROIT

The Church and Race Segregation

OUTRANKING in its far-reaching implications any other action taken by the Federal Council of Churches at its special meeting held in Columbus early this month was the sweeping declaration against racial segregation in the church. Facing the cold facts as revealed by objective study that body in plenary session declared:

"The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America hereby renounces the pattern of segregation in race relations as unnecessary and undesirable and a violation of the Gospel of love and human brotherhood. Having taken this action, the Federal Council requests its constituent communions to do likewise. As proof of their sincerity in this renunciation they will work for a non-segregated church and a non-segregated society."

The factual study cited in the statement showed that of the approximately 6,500,000 Negro Protestants in America about 6,000,000 are in separate Negro denominations. Thus it appears that "over 90 per cent of the Negroes are without association in work and worship with Christians of other races except in interdenominational organizations which involve a few of their leaders."

Here is belated recognition of a patent and grievous inconsistency in Christian practice which documents the tension between the essential and the existential church. Like every society of human beings the church is rooted in the culture, and at the more elemental levels of feeling and action the secular pattern overlies and all but stifles spiritual intention. Pronouncements by church bodies on economic and political questions often have sharp repercussions, but when the basic pattern of group relationships is challenged a deep and ominous rumbling of dissent is heard. It may be expected in the present instance—to the extent that the statement is taken at its face value.

It is for this reason that many churchmen of honest mind and sound instincts oppose social pronouncements which give little promise of full and early implementation. They argue that an ethical affirmation which runs beyond any anticipated level of practice is stultifying if not hypocritical. No doubt this is often true. For it is all too easy to compensate a grievous delinquency by self-deceptive

moral eloquence. Yet without avowed principles that transcend achievement, present or prospective, religion lacks dynamic power. The crucial matter is the quality and strength of the intention expressed. If in denouncing the segregation pattern as unchristian we do no more than make a gesture that screens from our own vision the quality of our behavior we manifestly do evil in the sight of the Lord. But moral impotence can result from failure to render a clear verdict as well as from a failure of nerve at the point of performance. Without a categorical "This is wrong," both persons and institutions are deprived of moral perspective.

Moreover, refusal to make a clear-cut moral judgment because we do not wish to be caught in an inconsistency is a form of cowardice. And when this is glorified as scorn of hypocrisy it becomes cheap self-righteousness. There is a world of difference between a superficial perfectionism that has unlimited facilities for renouncing evil and a rugged moral realism that elects to stand squarely under the judgment of God.

The church is forever in danger of shunning absolute judgments that are clearly dictated by Christian principle for fear of putting too great a strain on its "fellowship." It is under that kind of treatment that the fellowship evaporates. Unity in diversity is a valid ideal but one that is always in danger of corruption. The moral judgment now crystallizing about race segregation is akin to that which condemned slavery. It will not be abolished even in the church at one stroke, but the important thing is that no congregation and no denomination should ever have a clear conscience while conforming to the pattern. If they can do so then the Christianity to which they subscribe is not that of the New Testament. Just as the relationship between a Hitlerized church and a free church was wholly artificial, so the kinship between people who believe that race segregation at the altar of God does no violence to the Gospel and those who affirm the contrary is strained and inauthentic. Had the controversy over the Christian testimony concerning war been an issue between people who hold war to be a normal pattern of relationships and people who affirm the moral necessity of eradicating it, the church could not have

sustained the shock. There could be no unity in such fundamental diversity. It is difficult to see the race issue in any different light.

It is doubtful, indeed, if there are many Christians in America today who, faced by the necessity of rendering a judgment, would not admit that a segregated church is a denial of Christianity. This is why such a statement as that promulgated at Columbus should have a catalytic effect in inducing renunciation of a sin that has gone unconfessed.

Reforms do not come about by fiat. This one has many angles. It involves not only the pattern of congregational worship but the conduct of hospitals, schools and theological seminaries, and employment practices in a great variety of establishments. Time, patience and courage will be required. But it is to be hoped that the church in America is entering upon a new phase in respect to race relations; that while differences will persist as to strategy, we are approaching agreement upon the abolition of segregation, as a Christian goal. A failure in this crucial matter would go far to sustain the disturbing judgment often heard today that the church is no longer the custodian of the Christian gospel.

F. E. J.

Editorial Notes

Tardily we move to meet the needs of a starving world and to bring at least the "crumbs which fall from the rich man's table" to alleviate the hunger of many nations. One hopes that what we do will not be "too little and too late." The President's appointment of a commission under Herbert Hoover to deal with the food problem is the kind of action which was suggested months ago, but which he was unwilling to take at that time because it was assumed that the American people were not ready to make the sacrifices, which would be required to meet Europe's need. The commission is going to try to reduce American food consumption, particularly cereals and fats, through voluntary effort. One wonders whether this voluntary system will be adequate. Would it not have been better to introduce a modified rationing system? Might not the American public have responded to such a measure, even as now it responds to measures which were thought politically inadvisable several months ago? We may be fat, comfortable and somewhat ignorant of the world's needs. But we are not without conscience or soul.

The growing tension between Russia and the West, heightened by Churchill's ill-timed and ill-advised suggestion for an Anglo-American military alliance, makes a creative solution of the atomic

bomb problem more and more difficult. Any proposal for turning the secret over to the UNO means, in the present circumstances, sharing it with Russia. That has become a political impossibility. The only remaining alternative is to make a solemn covenant never to use the bomb first and to destroy our stock pile as a proof of our *bona fides*. However irresponsible the Russian intransigence of the moment may seem, we ought not to forget that our possession of the bomb gives us the most tremendous advantage of unilateral security.

The idea that we ought to make a covenant never to use the bomb first has spread spontaneously in various parts of the country. Various organizations have taken it up. Hanson Baldwin, the military critic of the *New York Times*, has given it support. This is an idea worth writing your senator about.

There is a tremendous contest in Washington between those who want to place the atomic energy, primarily under military control and those who would support Senator McMahon's senatorial committee in establishing a primarily civilian commission. The conflict takes the form of support for the McMahon bill on the one hand, which has the right of way in the Senate and the old May bill, which has the right of way in the House. All the scientists and university authorities, not to speak of liberal citizens in the country, are strongly supporting the Senate bill. Yet the chances at the moment are that the principals of the May bill will win the day until the general public is aroused to the issues.

The theologians committee of the Federal Council, which brought in a report to the Council on the Christian attitude toward the atomic bomb, suggested that Christian people of America ought to make a gesture of repentance for the guilt of the irresponsible use of the bomb without warning. The suggestion is that some relief work for Hiroshima and Nagasaki be made the token of our sense of guilt. The suggestion has been, on the whole well received, though not without criticism from some Christians who think it wrong to express such guilt toward the foe. Are we not the righteous victors? Before we engaged in this war, many Christians thought we were not righteous enough to defend the cause of justice. Now there are many who think we proved our righteousness by defending justice against tyranny. Both types of Christians were wrong. We had to defend justice even though we were not righteous enough to do it. And we must confess our guilt as unrighteous men and nations, particularly in the hour of victory. We are covered with many forms of guilt, including the guilt of doing so much evil while we tried to do good.

R. N.

The Problem of Europe and America

FRED J. DENBEAUX

THE present and ominous dislocation among the powers reveals a mutual depth of misunderstanding and political ineptitude, but more significantly, that we are caught up within tides of irrationalities that seem to be bent upon the total destruction of civilization. Torrents of national stubbornness seem to defy the constraining influence of the reservoir of good will and hope with which humanity tries to face the post-war world. While the present tension between Russia and America does rise out of an historic antagonism between Capitalism and Marxism, nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean either catastrophe or the impossibility of reconciliation. David Zaslavsky, Russian foreign affairs commentator, rightly emphasizes this fact, in a *New York Times* quotation, when he says "the old bourgeois democracy and the new Soviet democracy proved they could work together against a common enemy. Who believe that, given good will, they cannot work together in peacetime?" The resolution of the problems of Capitalism and Marxism are dependent upon the solution of a deeper and more basic problem, namely, that of the difference rising out of the vulnerability of the European generally and the Russian specifically and the relative invulnerability of the American. The differences arising out of these two conditioning factors have created the misunderstandings and suspicions which have magnified and complicated the joint political-economic problems confronting these two nations.

It is significant that almost every controversy between the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet Union revolves around the meaning of freedom. Russia's lethargy in fulfilling treaty requirements in regard to both Iran and Manchuria arises out of her feeling that, as Mr. Vishinsky put it in an earlier controversy, freedom and political irresponsibility follow strangely parallel lines for the Western powers. The fact that Russia seems sometimes almost paranoiac in her fear of encirclement should not detract from the realization that, with or without the atomic bomb, Russia is the most vulnerable and, since she is the land bridge between East and West, must be constantly looking in two directions.

There is an amazing lack of imagination on our part in not being able to sense the problems of vulnerability. Relative invulnerability has given us a queer rigidity in regard to history. Standards are carefully defined; they are clothed in law, they become axioms. The European man, on the other hand, must be much more flexible in his ability to make compromises. The historical pressures of living diversities prohibit the mind from following those exact patterns which are so central to our thinking.

Our rigidity has been indicated not only by our failures to accommodate policy to new and unexpected developments but also by our predilection for pronouncements and formulae. We speak as though an exact definition would solve a critical problem. The European man recognizes that all definitions are subordinate to fluctuating situations and that a formula is dead that cannot respond to pressure. Obviously while this makes for a tendency which meets the pressures from below, it also leads to opportunism and a cynical attitude toward the spoken or written word. We, on the other hand, act a little bit lost if the formula doesn't work and in a daze write another formula as though this would change the situation. The Atlantic Charter became for us a kind of a *creed*, deviation from which would be dishonorable and confusing. The European man found the charter to be a suitable and timely definition of an essential mood but one which did not have eternal significance. The inflexibility of our minds has been irritating to the Europeans, and what appears to be the shifting loyalties of the Europeans have seemed dishonest and lacking in judgment to us. Historically our perspective of "innocence" has been a temptation to cynical European statesmen, and the "opportunism" of Europeans has caused us to withdraw to safer and cleaner realms.

Perspective is affected by the degree of involvement in the crucial issues of history. Fundamentally there is a difference between a nation which, because of its invulnerability, can claim that it has neither sought war nor been responsible for wars, and European nations which, because of the pressures of vulnerability, can never quite escape the judgments of history. America being "guiltless" will achieve therefore an objectivity and directness of judgment which European nations cannot match since they must be circuitous and devious in avoiding the areas of their manifest guilt. Yet both the "guilty" and the "innocent" will have an uneasy relation to history and because of this uneasiness will be forced to construct myths which will clothe them with the responsibilities of eternal verifications. Thus America will find peace in the myth that she has always been drawn into wars for which she is not responsible while Europeans will find relief in the idea of *lebensraum*, encirclement or in the general security myths. It is interesting that recognition of the shrinking character of the world has drawn us into a similar security consciousness in our conception of the Pacific as an American lake.

But involved or not we still persist in assuming an Olympian detachment and objectivity. Therefore

we are extraordinarily naive in regard to the relativity of moral standards in the political area. We believe that good is good and that evil is not the same at all. Too much concern for the gray tones becomes an excuse for indecision. This explains somewhat the pre-occupation of our liberal world with categorical conceptions, i.e., Fascism. The continued use of this term after the destruction of the centers of historic Fascism suggests an oversimplification of history. In part this accounts for the failure of liberalism generally to understand the very complicated relation of the German people to Fascism and also why it is not possible for the Germans to acknowledge guilt in the manner which we expect. In a very real sense the court at Nuremburg is not the last judgment and it is not right to expect men, even guilty men, to negate themselves before us as though we were God and therefore without guilt. If the Russians also seem to have a fondness for categorical definitions it is for entirely different motives, partly because it is a standard trick with which to embarrass opposition and to cloak objectives and partly because the mythology of Communism must set the whole world up on an either-or basis. The European man, even those who have suffered greatly, knows that circumstances have a great deal more to do with the manner in which an individual accepts or rejects historical evil, than we in America would be prepared to admit. In this sense the European is much more profound because he views evil from an historical rather than from a personal point of view.

Americans expect that history will conform to what is right. So does the European but he isn't permitted to be quite so sure of his standards. Americans interpret war guilt formally and mechanically. The army, for instance, decides that anyone who was a Nazi prior to 1934 is to be separated from all responsibility in the future of Germany. Once our standard is defined it is expected that reality will conform to it. Actually there were numbers of confused nationalists who became disillusioned with the excesses of Nazism and who ceased, not without some sacrifice, to be active in the party. At the same time many of the most vicious members were those who were too young to join until after 1933. The Russians understand this problem better and have been more realistic in their refusal to set up such exact standards. Knowing that good and evil cannot be so absolutely separated, they make overtures to all except war criminals, because it is impossible to maintain these distinctions into eternity. Finally what does one do with former Nazis? The Russians use them and we exclude them—which means, as Werner Richter in his book *Re-Educating Germany* suggests, that we keep alive focal infections and potential centers of resistance to any genuinely honest political movement within Germany. It is of course right that, in the immediate future, all Germans who are suspects should not be given adminis-

trative power, but it is possible to utilize technical skills under the careful supervision of non-fascists. Those who are criminals must either be destroyed or educated. They cannot be ignored. To freeze them out of responsibility is to create a new and dangerously confused class of frustrated and bitter rebels who, for economic reasons if no other, will attempt to destroy responsible order so that they can again regain power.

European man finds that the freedom of history is constantly being imperilled by some dark fate. If European statesmen seem to be unduly cynical in regard to treaties it is because they are convinced by the pressures of vulnerability that peace is only a relative condition and that the more violent forces of history can be held in check for only a limited period. Therefore it is the responsibility of the statesman, no matter what his statements on peace, to safeguard the interests of the state so that peace will not weaken the possibilities of defense. Americans, on the other hand, have more latitude, 3,000 miles of it, so they aren't quite so convinced that history is potentially catastrophic. They believe that war can be avoided just because it is necessary to believe that man is in control of history and that proper action can always beget proper ends. There is certainly more profundity in the European view which recognizes that there are subterranean depths in the soul of collective man which resists all expressions of rational and moral will. History is sometimes under the control of daemonic powers and, in this sense, Europe being what it was, Fascism was an historical inevitability. This is difficult for us to understand because we believe that there are no forces which cannot be broken on the rock of our good will. Partly of course our point of view is the result of our historical adolescence. Boy scout morality expressed in political creeds and formulae do not solve the problems of history. It can be hoped that experience will give us the maturity and flexibility with which we will be able to respond more intelligently to the pressures of history.

Around the problem of vulnerability, two mutually exclusive philosophies of history have arisen. The cynicism and opportunism of the European mentality as well as the false objectivity, moralism and self-righteousness of America is prohibitive of any community on an international basis and of any lasting resolution of the present tensions. Neither can find a basis for responsibility because responsibility must be defined from beyond history if it is to be more than the projection of national interest. Cynicism is the result of the divorcement of the level of history from the level of eternity. Moralism is the result of the identification of the level of history with the level of the eternal. In either case the level of history becomes bereft of meaning. The European mentality can justify any action as a result of vulnerability with the claim that space and

time prohibits responsibility and objectivity. If Europe seems to us sometimes to be too indifferent to the claims of the eternal—we should remember that we have come dangerously close to idolatry in our political judgments. In this connection it is interesting to note that those among us, both political and clerical, who are most provoked by the supposed lack of loyalty to such a formula as the Atlantic Charter actually have much less interest in the binding power of such a document as the Ten Commandments. Thus do we substitute historical relativities for eternal ultimates. This is especially true of those who must believe that democracy is the ultimate order and the only order in which God can properly operate.

In both Europe and America the transcendence of national interest is impossible because cynicism and moralism have destroyed the dynamic tension between man and God. In both Europe and America the Church has become ineffectual. In both cases it has capitulated to a more intellectually powerful secularism. The dualism of orthodoxy and pietism has clothed the naked power of nations with demonic qualities. The tendency to identify the two levels by American liberalism has sacrificed the power of the eternal to redeem history. In the face of catastrophic evil both are powerless—the pious man can only cluck his tongue at evil and the liberal can only hope for a better day.

The American man and the European man are failures because, not being able to relate themselves to the eternal, they can never bridge the gap between themselves and achieve mutuality. Both conceptions of history have failed and will continue to fail until the Church rediscovers and re-establishes a center to history. Only the Church can discover and proclaim that center which is strong enough to discipline the anarchies of history and therefore establish community. The Church can do this only insofar as it dares to affirm a theological understanding of existence—for only theology possesses that dialectical understanding by which time can be related to eternity, man to God.

There is one element of hope for European man. Among German ministers, the *judgment* and *crisis* of history has opened some new doors. For the first time the German clergy has been awakened to the necessity of breaking the dualism, the eternal separation between God's order and the temporal order. There is a very strong feeling among the younger clergy that the Word must express itself very specifically in regard to the political possibilities and responsibilities before the German people. This is a radical departure for a Church which has been notoriously passive in its orthodoxy and piety. The manner in which the German clergy is able to debate with vigor the controversy between Barth and Brunner indicates theological health and hope. Whether a theological faith, arising out of this situa-

tion, will have the strength to undermine European cynicism and to affirm the possibilities of history in a dialectical relation to the level of eternity, is not yet known. But we can be thankful that men are again serious about theology and that perhaps Christian thought will break out of the secular bonds which have for so long made the Church into either a tool of the State or into an impotent refuge for the frustrated.

Obviously the European Church has an advantage over the American Church. In Europe it is much more difficult to avoid the sense of judgment which arises out of devastation and the destruction of a culture. America alone has come out of the war with more power, and this may encourage self-sufficiency. Fortunately the American Church is not without humility in regard to this power. But humility is not enough unless it causes us to re-examine the theological bases of faith and life. In America, perhaps more than anywhere else in the world, faith has had to depend upon a synthesis with secularism in order to maintain itself. Chaplains especially will not forget their uneasiness about the vagueness and the incoherence of the Protestant faith. In contrast to a strongly defined Army ideology, the Christian faith seemed wan and apologetic. Partly one had the feeling that the best minds of the day had not been attracted to Christian thinking, and partly one had the feeling that the timidity of the Church was due to an inner uncertainty as to its mission and authority. It is not strange therefore that we accepted the role of tolerated but queer country cousins.

The reflective Christian in America cannot help but be embarrassed by the weakness of his own theology. If the European theologian is a little bit smug in his evaluation of American theology—that too is not surprising. In the history of American Christianity *what* theological contributions have we made which have been strong enough to make an impression on the World Church? In some sense we have an amazingly small amount of self respect in that we are willing to be a symbol to the World Church of financial generosity without intellectual depth. Perhaps it would be better if we did not defend ourselves on that score.

But the problem of history still remains with us. Our secularism is about to contribute its share to the smashing of our world. Until our Church recovers its seriousness in a persuasive and forthright theology, we cannot hope to do much more than to make our pronouncements, our formulae, and we shall find that the stubborn and unyielding irrationalities of our day will not heed us. Only in a theology which is serious and which profoundly understands the tension between God and man, can the Church gain that strength which will make it the effective agent of that God who, in judgment and in mercy, is the sovereign Lord of history.

Message of the World Council of Churches

THE Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches assembled at Geneva in February for its first meeting after the World War, sends the following message to the churches:

The world today stands between life and death. Men's hopes of a better world have not been fulfilled. Millions are enduring intolerable suffering. The nations seem impotent to deal with the crucial problems of international order. A heavy burden weighs upon all mankind.

We face this crisis as Christians, whose own consciences are gravely disturbed. Yet God in His mercy has committed to us the ministry of His Word, and that Word we are bound to declare. Men are going the way of death because they disobey God's Will. All renewal depends upon repentance, upon turning from our own way to God's way. He is calling men to a supreme decision. "I have set before you life and death: therefore choose life."

War is the result of human self-will and of men's tragic inability to find the true solution of their conflicts. We pray God that the United Nations will choose the way of life and save future generations from the scourge of war. But the time is short. Man's triumph in the release of atomic energy threatens his destruction. Unless men's whole outlook is changed, our civilization will perish.

An illusory peace is little better than war. No peace can be lasting unless it is built on true spiritual foundations. We appeal to all men of good will and all who believe in spiritual values and forces to work together for an order of justice and humanity.

Victory Brings Responsibility

All nations are under the judgment of God. Those that have been defeated are suffering a fearful retribution. But the springs of their recovery are within; and if they turn to God and heed the voices of those among them who, even in the darkest days, withstood the forces of evil, they can yet take their proper place in a world community. The victorious nations have also suffered greatly, but their victory brings with it a new responsibility to God. They should combine justice with mercy. To seek vengeance against their former enemies by depriving them of the necessities of life, or by mass expulsion of their populations, or in any other manner, can only bring fresh disaster. There must be a new beginning in the relationships of all nations. The nation has its own place in God's purpose for mankind, but national egotism is a sin against the Creator of all peoples, great and small alike. No nation can fulfill God's purpose for itself which fails to answer His call for full cooperation and fellowship with other nations as members of one family.

There is a mutual inter-dependence between social order and international order.

We therefore appeal especially to the Government of the Five Great Powers to rise to their responsibilities to the world. It was by the union of their forces that they won victory in the war. We ask them to unite their whole strength in a common purpose now for the establishment of justice, for the relief of hunger, and for the development of a world community of free peoples. Unless they turn from their old ways of reliance upon mere might, and own their subjection to God's law of righteousness and love, they pursue the way of disaster and death. "I have set before you life and death: therefore choose life."

Ministry of Reconciliation

A special duty is laid upon the Churches to help the nations to choose the way of life. Christians are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. To them is given the ministry of reconciliation. It is their responsibility to bear witness by word and deed that the law of God finds its fulfilment in the love of Christ. We call upon all followers of Christ to do whatever they can to help those who are enduring the terrible need and suffering of the present day, and to strive after a better order in which the rights of man will be fully recognized and protected. We trust that those Churches which are stronger will continue to aid the Churches in the liberated and suffering countries, and that all will increasingly support the world mission of the Church. We earnestly urge that all will pray without ceasing for forgiveness, for unity, and for real human brotherhood.

We ourselves give thanks to God for our ecumenical fellowship in Christ. Through the years of war that fellowship has been broadened and deepened, and by God's grace we have discovered anew that He strengthens us in the universal fellowship of His Holy Church. We rejoice that we have been able to come together again after the trials of these years, and have found our hearts knit together in Christian love. We testify that in this first meeting after the war we have met and worked together as one brotherhood in a spiritual unity in Christ which has transcended our differences. For this experience our hearts are glad and thankful, and in it we see a sign of hope for all mankind. In this God hath made known to us the mystery of His will, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ. He is our peace. In Him is the life of mankind.

"I have set before you life and death: therefore choose life."

The World Church: News and Notes

Niemoeller Warns German Church Against Committing Itself to Political Parties

The church in Germany must guard against committing itself to any particular political party lest it alienate workers, Pastor Martin Niemoeller warned. The Confessional church leader took part in a symposium conducted by the Lausanne Gazette among members of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches which recently held sessions in Geneva.

"We wish to avoid any new barriers between us and the workers, particularly at this time when there are signs of a rapprochement," he said.

Dr. Niemoeller cited the "positive attitude" shown by the church toward the Social Democratic Party of Hesse during recent elections to emphasize "the danger of the church cutting itself off from Socialists and Communists with whom Christians established friendship and understanding during the Nazi regime."

Also interviewed regarding church attitudes toward new political parties in their countries were Professor Hendrik Kraemer, of the Dutch Reformed Church; Bishop Eivind Berggrav, Primate of the Norwegian Lutheran Church; and Bishop Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, Primate of the Danish Lutheran Church.

Dr. Kraemer said the invitation of the new labor party in Holland to the church to speak out on national problems represents "a victory for the church, but also a responsibility."

"Persons in all walks of life," he asserted, "are looking to the church, not to speak of generalities that touch nobody, but to speak concretely about problems of national life. 'Church and Society' groups are now very active in presenting the moral viewpoint on social questions under discussion."

The need for examining social problems from the church viewpoint is being urged in Norway by the Christian Democratic Party founded some months ago, Bishop Berggrav declared. Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard said the church in Denmark has won the support of representative groups who demand that the church speak clearly on social questions.

The four leaders agreed that churches must promote the reconciliation of all peoples "in order to create a proper climate for a just and durable peace."

A fifth participant in the symposium, Anglican Bishop George K. A. Bell of Chichester, warned against "mutilation" of Germany's economic life. (RNS)

World YMCA Votes to Readmit German Group

Meeting for the first time since the beginning of the war, the executive committee of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations voted to readmit the German YMCA into the world organization. A resolution was adopted pledging "the hand of friendship" to German "Y" groups forced in 1938 to sever all outside contacts.

Attended by over a hundred delegates from 35 countries, the meeting voted to hold a plenary session in the summer of 1947, to be attended by up to 300 representatives.

General secretary Tracy Strong announced that word had been received from the Japanese YMCA intimating that one of its biggest tasks of the immediate future will be among 6,000,000 repatriated Japanese citizens.

Restoring of personnel and provision of minimum material needs will be given priority in YMCA reconstruction plans, Mr. Strong said in a report read at the meeting. He revealed that YMCA property losses amounted to \$17,000,000, but said that reconstruction plans are still "far in the future."

The meeting heard reports of prisoner of war work in 33 countries which to date has cost \$15,000,000. Responding to a message from Shanghai for aid to 150,000 Japanese internees, delegates voted to continue this and other prisoner of war work. (RNS)

Seek Release of Sudeten German Church Leader

Dr. Erich Wehrenfennig, president of the German Evangelical Church of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (the Sudeten German Evangelical Church), has been imprisoned for almost a month by the Czech Government, according to an appeal on his behalf received in Geneva by Protestant churchmen.

Dr. Wehrenfennig would have been deported to Germany some months ago but for the intercession of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren which appealed to the government to permit him to stay until the work of closing his churches was completed.

The belated arrest of Dr. Wehrenfennig, who is 74 and in poor health, is said to have taken place because in May, 1938, he participated in a Pan-German celebration and also wrote a preface to a Nazified church book.

His friends, who are fearful for his life, declare that he has been mistaken for a cousin, Gottfried Wehrenfennig, who showed strong Nazi leanings. They assert that Dr. Wehrenfennig often intervened for the church with the Nazis so that school rooms would be kept available for teaching the catechism. (RNS)

PRM Leaders Press for Liberty of Education in New French Constitution

Popular Republican Movement leaders have announced they will demand guarantees for liberty of education in the new constitution being debated by the French National Constituent Assembly. The issue involves the right of parents to choose between sending children to church or state schools.

If the PRM leaders are successful in their demands, it will mean placing church schools on a parity with state schools and giving them the right to government support. Such proposals, however, are being strongly opposed by Communists and Socialists, who want only state schools recognized under the new constitution.

Leftist groups have not openly advocated abolition of church schools, but are solidly against subsidies for any but state schools. Although not prepared at present to risk a bitter quarrel over the issue that might divide the nation, leftist leaders are anxious that liberty of education should not be defined as a constitutional right. (RNS)

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Berggrav Sees "Confessionalism" Stimulating Interfaith Cooperation

Bishop Eivind Berggrav of Oslo, leader of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, has stated that although denominational emphasis is increasing in the world, the prospects for interfaith cooperation have improved. He applied his remarks not only to Protestant Churches but to their relations with Catholics.

The Norwegian bishop, who was in Geneva to attend sessions of the World Council of Churches, said the growth of "confessionalism" would raise obstacles in the world of politics, but would have the opposite effect "in the world of God."

He expressed the opinion that the Roman Catholic Church is becoming much more cautious in dealings with other communions, but asserted that this tendency should cause no concern.

"Although Catholic voices critical of ecumenical gatherings had been heard, it is also clear that the spirit of Christ is moving them to ask whether there is not more in common than we heretofore have realized," he said. (RNS)

French Church Uses Drama To Spread Gospel

Reviving a custom of more than 400 years ago, the Reformed Church of France, through the Protestant Youth Council, is using the theater as a means of spreading the gospel.

The church began experimenting with the drama in 1943 when Pastor Marc Herubel formed a troop of young actors and took them to the towns and villages of central France. Their repertoire consisted of three humorous religious plays—Jeb, Noah, and Jonas.

To many audiences this light treatment of the Biblical stories was received with disapproval. But as the public

became accustomed to accepting the Biblical characters as human beings the plays became more popular.

Last year Pastor Herubel directed a troop of 40 young people in the production of a play inspired by the Catholic drama, "The Visitors From Heaven." Divided into two groups, each playing different regions, the troop performed before a varied audience—peasants, industrial workers, middle class Protestant families, a large number of Roman Catholics, and many who normally were indifferent to religion.

Reaction was varied, but the reception on the whole was encouraging, leading the Protestant Council to plan for more experiments in religious drama. (RNS)

Finnish Churches Face Serious Inflation

Greatest need of Finland's churches is for money to pay salaries of religious workers facing serious inflation, the Rev. Verner Aurola, secretary of the Ecumenical Committee of Finland, declared at headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

He reported that the churches "have experienced no difficulty from the Russians or from the Finnish Communists," and that interest in religion has increased sharply since the beginning of the war, especially among young people. He said a new youth organization has been set up in the Helsingfors YMCA.

Pastor Aurola, who is also a member of the Ecumenical Reconstruction Committee, said the Finnish people are suffering severely from food, clothing and other shortages. Many houses, especially in Lapland, he stated, were destroyed and cement and other materials are badly needed to relieve housing shortages which are now forcing from two to four families to live in a single apartment. (RNS)

Hungarian Protestant Church Life at Low Ebb

Post-war inflation is striking heavily at Hungary's Protestant churches, already severely handicapped by loss of revenue-producing properties under new laws nationalizing church-owned estates. Authorities report that Protestant church life is at its lowest ebb in centuries.

Indicating the extent of the financial debacle which has overtaken the churches is the fact that the two largest Protestant bodies—the Reformed and the Lutheran—are now almost completely dependent on the state.

Today all teachers in the denominations' schools are being paid entirely by the state which previously paid only half their salaries. The state also pays two-thirds of the salaries of bishops and pastors, but inflation has reduced churchmen to a condition of virtual penury. A bishop receives 900,000 pengoes monthly, not enough to buy half a pound of meat. (Ernest Zaugg, RNS Correspondent).

Author in This Issue

Fred J. Denbeaux has returned from years of service in the army as a chaplain and is now teaching at Wellesley College. His article in this issue grows out of his experience as a chaplain in the Forces of Occupation in Germany.

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